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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Our prayer this morning will be led by Commissioner Robert A. Watson, of the Salvation Army.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Commissioner Robert A. Watson, the Salvation Army, Alexandria, VA, offered the following prayer:

Sovereign Lord, we thank You for this day, the day You have made. We will be glad and rejoice in it. We acknowledge You as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and the only proper object of religious worship. How privileged we are, Father, to live in America. We thank You for those of earlier generations who sacrificed so much, making possible the freedoms we enjoy. Help us not to take for granted the benefits of our society, and to happily share our blessings with those around us. We thank You for the gifts of experience, intellect, and talent with which the Members of this legislative body are endowed. As they deal with the complex issues which are so important to the people of our Nation, please grant them wisdom, compassion, sound judgment, and the satisfaction of having served well. And now, as we enjoy again the beauty of a Washington springtime, help us to allow each sign of new life to remind us that You are the giver and sustainer of life, and to use Your gift wisely and well. In Your majestic name we pray. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I announce that it is hoped that the Senate will shortly enter into a consent agreement, which would allow for consideration of the resolution relating to the decertification of Mexico. If that agreement is reached, the Senate would be expected to begin consideration of the resolution this morning, possibly as early as 10 o'clock. Rollcall votes are expected on the Mexico resolution, and all Members will be notified as to when those votes can be anticipated once we reach this agreement. It is also possible that the Senate will begin consideration of the nuclear waste legislation prior to the Easter adjournment. And, again, all Senators will be notified accordingly. I thank my colleagues for their attention.

(Mr. HAGEL assumed the chair.)

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I yield myself the time allotted to the majority leader under the standing order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 482 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

WHATEVER BECAME OF THE TAXPAYERS' AGENDA?

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, in November 1994, the American voters sent a clear message to Washington that resulted in a watershed election and the first Republican Congress in 40 years. That message was to enact a taxpayers' agenda of balancing the budget, limiting the size and scope of Government, and returning tax dollars and power to the taxpayers.

Two years ago today, the House of Representatives was marking day 76 of its unprecedented 100-day effort to carry out the taxpayers' agenda reflected in the Contract With America. They kept their promise to the American people by bringing all 10 provisions of the contract up for a vote and passing almost all of them.

In 1996, despite an unprecedented assault by the media, hostile special interest groups, and the big tax and spenders in Washington, the Republican majorities in Congress were preserved, indeed, even increased here in the Senate. The voters once again sent the message that they wanted the taxpayers' agenda enacted, but they wanted Congress and the President to come together in completing the work started in the 104th Congress.

Yet somehow this message has been misinterpreted by a number of my Republican colleagues, who seem to have come away from the 1996 elections with the mistaken notion that the effort to pass the taxpayers' agenda should be stalled or delayed. What concerns me most is that some of the loudest calls for retreating from that agenda are coming from within our own party leadership. This is not the same Republican majority that arrived in Washington in January 1995, ready to create fundamental change in a government that had enslaved so many working families for so many years. It is like the ancient Vikings who sometimes burned their boats after arriving in a new land. We stepped onto the shore

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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